

# Michigan Public Service Commission

Department of Labor & Economic Growth

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**6545 Mercantile Way, Suite 7  
P.O. Box 30221  
Lansing, Michigan 48909  
800.292.9555**

# Commission Authority

- **Jurisdiction provided through state law**
- **Regulate aspects of**
  - investor-owned natural gas & electric utilities,
  - rural electric cooperatives,
  - local landline telephone companies,
  - intrastate trucking, and
  - video franchising
- **3 MPSC Commissioners - appointed by Governor for staggered, six-year terms**

# Commissioners



Orjiakor N. Isiogu  
Chairman



Monica Martinez  
Commissioner



Steven A. Transeth  
Commissioner

# How Decisions Are Made

- **Application filed with Commission**
- **Opportunity for intervention**
- **Testimony is filed**
- **Hearing held before ALJ**
- **ALJ issues Proposal for Decision**
- **Commission issues Order**
- **Parties can appeal Commission Order**

# Other Commission Activities

- Federal Regulatory Issues
- Federal & State Legislation
- Energy Security & Homeland Security
- Safety Standards
- Consumer Information
- Customer Complaints & Inquiries

# Energy Issues

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# Energy Costs

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- Under Michigan law, utilities can recover the cost of natural gas purchases and electricity they generate or purchase with no mark-up
- Company must demonstrate it has used reasonable and prudent purchasing and generating practices, which are reviewed by the Commission
- Costs are set annually and reconciled the following year

# Natural Gas Prices

- Natural gas prices are set by national markets which are influenced by weather
- So far this year, there have been no damaging hurricanes to negatively affect natural gas production
- MichCon residential customers can expect an average increase of \$1.00 per month on natural gas bills this winter (assuming normal weather)



# Be Energy Smart

- Plan ahead
- Increase efficiency and conserve – there are many low-cost/no-cost measures
- Investigate your utility's budget payment plan
- Apply for financial assistance if eligible
- Contact your utility if you cannot pay your bill – do not wait for a shut-off notice

# Conservation Tips

- Add attic insulation
- Clean or replace furnace air filter once a month
- Dial down – install programmable thermostat
- Caulk and weatherstrip window and doors to prevent drafts
- Insulate water heater and pipes

**See “Energy Savers” Brochure**

# Energy Assistance Programs

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- Winter Protection Plan (Commission Rules)
- Earned Income Credit (Taxes)
- Home Heating Credit (State of Michigan/Treasury)
- State Emergency Relief Program  
(Michigan Depart. of Human Services)
- Community Agencies (Salvation Army, THAW, 2-1-1)
- Shut-off Protection for Military on Active Duty & for Medical Emergency (Commission Rules)

# New Rule Changes

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- Utilities can create an expanded Winter Protection Program to serve customers above 150% of poverty level
- Winter Protection Program extended one month from Nov. 1 to March 31
- Payment terms extended from 17 to 21 days
- Final bills based on actual usage - no late fees assessed on estimated bills
- Qualifying customers can direct payments to gas or electric (when bill is combined)

# Telecommunications Issues



# Commission Jurisdiction

- Commission has jurisdiction over rates for Primary Basic Local Exchange Service
- The Commission does not have jurisdiction over long distance rates
- The Commission does not have jurisdiction over enhanced services – call waiting, call forwarding, caller ID, etc.
- The Commission does not have jurisdiction over cellular service, or VOIP

# Telephone Assistance

- **Lifeline**
  - Low-income customers can receive a minimum discount of \$8.25 per month
  - Low income seniors can get the greater of 25% or \$12.35 off their basic local service
- **Link-Up –Reduces installation charge for phone service by 50% - up to \$30**
- **Call local provider to sign up for Lifeline and Link-Up**
- **Michigan Relay Center – for hearing or speech impaired - 800.649.3777 or simply dial 711**



# Do Not Call List

## Register Free For Federal Do Not Call List

- By Telephone 888.382.1222
- On-line at [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov)
- Registration Effective for 5 Years

Michigan residents who sign up for the federal registry are automatically placed on the Michigan ***Do Not Call*** list.



# Protect MI Child Registry

- Register contact points (email addresses, instant messenger IDs, mobile phone addresses, fax numbers)
- Prohibits messages or advertisements from being sent to children – tobacco, “adult” material
- Registration is effective for 3 years
- [www.protectmichild.com](http://www.protectmichild.com)

# “Uniform Video Services Local Franchise Act” (2006 PA 480)

- Designed to promote competition in providing video service in Michigan
- MPSC designated agency to implement Act
- January 2007, MPSC created uniform franchising agreement for franchising entity and video provider
- MPSC has developed dispute resolution process

# Copper Theft Affects Everyone

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- Threatens public safety by leaving our most vulnerable residents without electricity
  - Customers left without vital 9-1-1 service with 32,000+ AT&T customer lines affected so far this year
  - 8 fatalities related to theft of DTE Energy assets
- Copper theft impacts our economy by increasing costs to all customers
- Prevent copper theft by reporting any suspicious activity around utility poles

**Police:** 9-1-1    **AT&T:** (800) 807-4205    **DTE:** (313) 235-9119

# Past Consumer Forums

## Results of Community Input

# New Payment & Assistance Options

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- Low-income customers can direct payments to gas or electric for combined bills
- 2 DTE Customer offices opened in Detroit
  - Mexicantown and Eastern market opened this summer
- Expanded list of pay agents – Kroger stores recently added
  - DTE pays \$1 of the \$1.50 pay agent fee
- DTE has more flexible credit policies

# Proactive Efforts

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- DTE Energy Community Energy Solutions Project
  - DTE Energy partnering with 4 local churches and THAW to provide on site assistance to eligible customers
- Osborn Project
  - Partnership between DTE Energy, Skillman Foundation and THAW as part of the Skillman Good Neighborhood Initiative
  - Works with families with children to improve energy efficiency of homes to reduce energy costs

# The MPSC has Consumer Alerts on a variety of topics

Check our information table before you leave



# For More MPSC Information

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**See our website at:  
[www.michigan.gov/mpsc](http://www.michigan.gov/mpsc)**

**Slide Presentation available on MPSC website above. Click on “Consumer Information” on the left side.**

**For Consumer Inquiries and Complaints**

**Call toll free:**

**800.292.9555**